international standards in the area of emigration policy.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate.

Remarks at Georgetown University
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Thank you very much, my good friend Father O'Donovan. You just gave the speech in 5 minutes; there's nothing for me to say. [*Laughter*] I thank you for welcoming me back. I thank the members of our administration who are here: Secretary Riley and Deputy Secretary Kunin, Ambassador Raiser, Director of the USIA Joe Duffy, Chairmen Sheldon Hackney and Jane Alexander, and Penn Kemble, the Deputy Director of the USIA. And I thank my former classmates, some of whom I see out here, and my friends and people around this country who have done so much to try to strengthen the bonds of American citizenship.

Today I want to have more of a conversation than deliver a formal speech, about the great debate now raging in our Nation, not so much over what we should do but over how we should resolve the great questions of our time here in Washington and in communities all across our country. I want to talk about the obligations of citizenship, the obligations imposed on the President and people in power and the obligations imposed on all Americans.

Two days ago we celebrated the 219th birthday of our democracy. The Declaration of Independence was also clearly a declaration of citizenship: " . . . all men are created equal, . . . endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, . . . among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness." It was also manifestly a declaration of citizenship in a different way. It was a declaration of interdependence: " . . . for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge . . . our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor." The distinguished American historian Samuel Eliot Morison, in his "History of the American People," wrote of these words, "These words are more revolutionary than anything written by Robespierre, Marx, or Lenin, more explosive than the atom, a continual challenge to ourselves as well as an inspiration to the oppressed of all the world."

What is the challenge to ourselves at the dawn of the 21st century, and how shall we meet it? First of all, we must remember that the Declaration of Independence was written as a commitment for all Americans at all times, not just in time of war or great national crisis.

My argument to you is pretty straightforward. I believe we face challenges of truly historic dimensions, challenges here at home perhaps greater than any we faced since the beginning of this century we are about to finish and the dawn of the industrial era. But they are not greater challenges in their own way than the ones we faced at our birth, greater challenges than those of slavery and civil war, greater than those of World War I or the Depression or World War II. And they can be solved, though they are profound. What are they?

Most people my age grew up in an America dominated by middle class dreams and middle class values, the life we wanted to live and the kind of people we wanted to be—dreams that inspired those who were born into the middle class; dreams that restrained and directed the lives of those who were much more successful and more powerful; dreams that animated the strivings of those who were poor because of the condition of their birth or because they came here as immigrants; middle class dreams that there would be reward for work and that the future of our children would be better than the lives we enjoyed; middle class values, strong families and faith, safe streets, secure futures.

These things are very much threatened today, threatened by 20 years of stagnant incomes, of harder work by good Americans for the same or lower pay, of increasing inequality of incomes, and increasing insecurity in jobs and retirement and health care. They are threatened

by 30 years of social problems of profound implications: of family break-ups, of a rising tide of violence and drugs, of declining birth rates among successful married couples and rising birth rates among young people who are not married. They are threatened by the failure of public institutions to respond, the failure of bureaucracies encrusted in yesterday's prerogatives and not meeting the challenges of today and tomorrow—the schools, the law enforcement agencies, the governments and their economic and other policies. They are threatened by the sheer pace and scope of change, as technology and ideas and money and decisions move across the globe at breathtaking rates, and every great opportunity seems to carry within it the seeds of a great problem.

So that we have anomalies everywhere: Abroad, the cold war ends, but we see the rise and the threat of technology-based destruction—sarin gas exploding in the subway in Japan, the bomb exploding in Oklahoma City. The Soviet Union is no more, and so they worry now in the Baltics about becoming a conduit for drug trafficking, and they worry in Russia about their banks being taken over by organized crime. And here at home, it all seems so confusing—the highest growth rates in a decade, the stock market at an all-time high, almost 7 million more jobs, more millionaires and new businesses than ever before, but most people working harder for less, feeling more insecure.

I saw it just the other day, this cartoon, which you probably can't see, but I'll read it to you. There's a politician—maybe it's supposed to be me—[*laughter*]—up here giving a speech at a banquet, one of those interminable banquets we all attend. And here's a waiter serving one of the attendees. The politician says, "The current recovery has created over 7.8 million jobs." The waiter says, "And I've got three of them." [*Laughter*]

In 1991, as Father O'Donovan said, I came here to Georgetown to talk about these challenges and laid out my philosophy about how we as a people, not just as a government but as a people, ought to meet them. I called it the New Covenant. I will repeat briefly what I said then because I don't believe I can do any better today than I did then in terms of what I honestly believe we ought to be doing.

I think we have to create more opportunity and demand more responsibility. I think we have to give citizens more say and provide them a more responsive, less bureaucratic Government. I think we have to do these things because we are literally a community, an American family that is going up or down together, whether we like it or not. If we're going to have middle class dreams and middle class values, we have to do things as private citizens, and we have to do things in partnership through our public agencies and through our other associations.

In 1994, when the Republicans won a majority in Congress, they offered a different view which they called their "Contract With America." In their view, most of our problems were personal and cultural; the Government tended to make them worse because it was bureaucratic and wedded to the past and more interested in regulating and choking off the free enterprise system and promoting the welfare state; and therefore, what we should do is to balance the budget as soon as possible, cut taxes as much as possible, deregulate business completely if possible, and cut our investments in things like welfare as much as possible.

As you know, I thought there were different things that ought to be done because I believed in partnership. I believed in supporting community initiatives that were working and preventing things before they happened, instead of just punishing bad behavior after it occurred, and trying to empower people to make the most of their own lives. So I believed that there were things we could do here in Washington to help, whether it was family leave, or tougher child support enforcement, or reforming the pension system to save the pensions of over 8 million American workers, or investing more in education, making college more affordable.

What I believe grows largely out of my personal history, and a lot of it happened to me a long time before I came to Georgetown and read in books things that made me convinced that I was basically right. I grew up in a small town in a poor State. When I was born at the end of World War II, my State's per capita income was barely half the national average. I was the first person in my family to go to college. When I was a boy, I lived for a while on a farm without an indoor toilet. It makes a good story, not as good as being born in a log cabin, but it's true. [*Laughter*]

I had a stepfather without a high school diploma and a grandfather, whom I loved above all people almost, who had a sixth-grade education. I lived in a segregated society, and I

lived in a family, as has now been well-documented, with problems of alcohol and, later, drug abuse. I learned a lot about what I call the New Covenant, about the importance of responsibility and opportunity.

I lived in a family where everybody worked hard and where kids were expected to study hard. But I also had a lot of opportunity that was given to me by my community. I had good teachers and good schools. And when I needed them, I got scholarships and jobs. I saw what happened to good people who had no opportunity because they happened to be black or because they happened to be poor and white and isolated in the hills and hollows of the mountains of my State.

I saw what happened in my own family to people who were good people but didn't behave responsibly. My stepfather was very responsible toward me but not very responsible toward himself. Anybody who's ever lived in a family with an alcoholic knows that there is nothing you can do for somebody else they are not prepared to do for themselves. And my brother, after all of his struggles with drug addiction, which included even serving some time in jail, I am sometimes more proud of him than I am of what I've done because he has a family and a son and a life, not because of the love and support that we all gave him but because of what he did for himself.

So my whole political philosophy is basically rooted in what I think works. It works for families and communities, and it worked pretty well for our country for a long time. If you look at recent American history, our country has never been perfect because none of us are, but we did always seem to be going in the right direction.

I remember when I was a boy in the fifties and sixties—I remember like it was yesterday when I graduated from high school in 1964, and we had about 3-percent unemployment, about 3- or 4-percent real growth, and very modest inflation. And we all just assumed that the American dream would work out all right if we could ever whip racism. If we could just whip that and make sure all poor people had a chance to work their way into the middle class, we could just almost put this country on automatic. I know that's hard to believe, but that's basically what we thought back then. If we could just somehow lift this awful racial burden off our shoulders and learn how to live together, we could just roll on.

And then in the sixties and the seventies and the eighties, the results got a lot more mixed. Contrary to what a lot of people say now in retrospect, the sixties were not all bad. A lot of good things happened. A lot of people passionately believed that they had a responsibility to help one another achieve the fullest of their God-given potential. And a lot of the important advances in civil rights and in education and in fighting poverty really made a difference. But it was also a time when many people began to have such profound cultural clashes that more and more people dropped out and became more self-indulgent.

Contrary to popular retrospect, a lot of good things happened in the seventies. We made a national commitment as a country to defend our environment. This is a safer, cleaner, healthier place because of what we've done for the last 25 years. We decided in a bipartisan way that the workplace ought to be safer; too many people were dying in the workplace. If any of you have ever spent any time in a factory, seen people walking around without all their fingers, you can appreciate that.

But it was also a time when we became profoundly disillusioned because of Watergate and a lot of other things. We really began to suspect that we couldn't trust our leaders or our institutions. And it was the beginning of the decline of middle class dreams for middle class people. In the sixties, the riots in the cities showed that more and more poor people began to doubt whether they would ever be able to work their way into the middle class. In the seventies, people who were in the middle class began to worry about whether they would ever be able to stay or what that meant. It began 20 years ago.

Then in the eighties, it was also a very mixed bag. It was a time when people exalted greed and short-term profit. It was a time when we built in, by bipartisan conspiracy in this community, the first structural deficit in the history of the United States of America and exploded our debt while we were reducing our investment in our most profound problems, while we spent the tax cuts and behaved just like the rest of the country, worrying about the short run. But it was also a time, let's not forget, where all across the country there was a renewed awareness of the dangers of drugs and drug use began to go down, smoking declined, voluntarism in-

creased. And there was a remarkable explosion of productivity in the industrial sector in America, and the American economy began to go through the changes necessary to be competitive.

In the nineties, everybody knows, I think, that there's been a sort of a sobering increase in personal values of commitment. You see it in the decline in the divorce rate and the increase in healthy habits among many people. You see more commitment expressed in groups and by individuals all across the country. You see it in people reaffirming their commitment to the families in small and large ways: the remarkable husband and wife minister team that I introduced in the State of the Union, the Reverend Cherrys, and their AME Zion Church near here, now one of the two or three biggest churches in America, founded on family outreach; the phenomenal success of this Promise-Keepers organization—you can fill any football stadium in America. It's an astonishing thing, because people want to do the right thing, and they want to get their families and their lives back together. And that's encouraging.

But let us not forget that these profound problems endure. Middle class dreams and middle class values, the things which have shaped our life and our experience and our expectations, are still very, very much at risk.

I will say again: We have all these aggregate indices that the economy has done well: almost 7 million new jobs, the stock market's over 4,500, all the things that you know. But while average income has gone up, median income, the person in the middle, has declined in the last 2 years. A sense of job security has declined with all the downsizing. More and more people are temporary workers. This is the only advanced country in the world where there's a smaller percentage of people under 65 in the work force with health insurance today than 10 years ago.

Millions of American people go home at night from their work and sit down to dinner and look at their children and wonder what they have done wrong, what did they ever do to fail. And they're riddled with worries about it. Millions more who are poor have simply given up on ever being able to work their way into a stable lifestyle. And that, doubtless, is fueling some of the disturbing increase in casual drug use among very young people and the rise in violence among young people. That threatens middle class values. In almost every major city in America the crime rate is down. Hallelujah! In almost every place in America, the rate of random violence among young people is up, even as the overall crime rate drops.

Government is struggling to change, and I'm proud of the changes we have made. But no one really believes that Government is fully adjusted to the demands of the 21st century and the information age. It clearly must still be less bureaucratic, more empowering, rely more on incentives if we still have to reduce spending and we have to find a way to do it while increasing our investment in the things that will determine our ability to live middle class dreams.

Politics has become more and more fractured, just like the rest of our lives; pluralized. It's exciting in some ways. But as we divide into more and more and more sharply defined organized groups around more and more and more stratified issues, as we communicate more and more with people in extreme rhetoric through mass mailings or sometimes semi-hysterical messages right before election on the telephone or 30-second ads designed far more to inflame than to inform, as we see politicians actually getting language lessons on how to turn their adversaries into aliens, it is difficult to draw the conclusion that our political system is producing the sort of discussion that will give us the kind of results we need.

But our citizens, even though their confidence in the future has been clouded and their doubts about their leaders and their institutions are profound, want something better. You could see it in the way they turned out for the town meetings in 1992. You could see it in the overwhelming, I mean literally overwhelming, response that I have received from people of all political parties to the simple act of having a decent, open conversation with the Speaker of the House in Claremont, New Hampshire. People know we need to do better. And deep down inside, our people know this is a very great country capable of meeting our challenges.

So what are the conclusions I draw from this? First of all, don't kid yourself. There are real reasons for ordinary voters to be angry, frustrated, and downright disoriented. How could our politics not be confusing when people's lives are so confusing and frustrating and seem to be so full of contradictory developments?

Secondly, this is now, as it has ever been, fertile ground for groups that claim a monopoly

on middle class values and old-fashioned virtue. And it's easy to blame the Government when people don't feel any positive results. It's easy to blame groups of others when people have to have somebody to blame for their own problems, when they are working as hard as they can and they can't keep up.

But there is real reason for hope, my fellow Americans. This is, after all, the most productive country in the world. We do a better job of dealing with racial and ethnic diversity and trying to find some way to bring out the best in all of our people than any other country with this much diversity in the world.

We have an environment that is cleaner and safer and healthier than it used to be. We still have the lead in many important areas that will determine the shape of societies in the 21st century. There is a real willingness among our people to try bold change. And most important of all, most Americans are still living by middle class values and hanging on to middle class dreams. And everywhere in this country there are examples of people who have taken their future into their own hands, worked with their friends and neighbors, broken through bureaucracy, and solved problems. If there is anything I would say to you, it is that you can find, somewhere in America, somebody who has solved every problem you are worried about.

So there is reason for hope. And I would say, to me the real heroes in this country are the people that are out there making things work and the people who show up for work every day, even though they're barely at and maybe even below the poverty line, but they still work full-time, obey the law, pay their taxes, and raise their kids the best they can. That's what this country is really all about. And so there is really no cause for the kind of hand-wringing and cynicism that dominates too much of the public debate today.

What do we have to do now? First of all, we've got to have this debate that is looming over Washington. We have to have it. It's a good thing. We are debating things now we thought were settled for decades. We are now back to fundamental issues that were debated like this 50, 60, 70 years ago. There is a group who believe that our problems are primarily personal and cultural. Cultural is a—basically a word that means, in this context, there are a whole lot of persons doing the same bad thing. [*Laughter*] And that's what people—and then if everybody would just sort of straighten up and fly right, why, things would be hunky-dory. And why don't they do it?

Now, I—you can see that with just two reasons—I'll give you two examples. And I made you laugh, but let's be serious. These people are honest and genuine in their beliefs. I will give you two examples that are sort of—stand out, but there are a hundred more that are more modulated: The NRA's position on gun violence, the Brady bill, and the assault weapons ban. Their position is: Guns don't kill people, people do. Find the people who do wrong, throw them in jail, and throw the key away. Punish wrongdoers. Do not infringe upon my right to keep and bear arms, even to keep and bear arsenals or artillery or assault weapons. Do not do that because I have not done anything wrong, and I have no intention of doing anything wrong. Why are you making me wait 5 days to get a handgun? What do you care if I want an AK–47 or an Uzi to go out and engage in some sort of sporting contest to see who's a better shot? I obey the law. I pay my taxes. I don't give you any grief. Why are you on my back? The Constitution says I can do this. Punish wrongdoers. I am sick and tired of my life being inconvenienced for what other people do.

Second example is the one that dominated the headlines in the last couple of days, what Senator Helms said about AIDS: "I'm sick and tired of spending money on research and treatment for a disease that could be ended tomorrow if everybody just straightened up and fly right. I'm tired of it. Why should I spend taxpayer—I've got a budget to balance. We're cutting aid to Africa. We're cutting education. We're cutting Medicare. Why should we spend money on treatment and research for a disease that is a product of people's wrongdoing? Illicit sex and bad drugs, dirty needles—let's just stop it."

Now, at one level, forgetting about those two examples, this argument is self-evidently right. Go back to what I told you about my family. A lot of you are nodding your heads about yours. There is a sense in which there is nothing the Government can do for anybody that will displace the negative impact of personal misconduct. And unless people are willing to work hard and do the best they can and advance themselves and their families, the ability of com-

mon action, no matter how well-meaning, won't work.

You look at every social program that's working in every community, and there are lots of them. I was just in New Haven for the opening of the Special Olympics, and I spent a lot of time with the LEAP program up there. It's an incredible program where these college students work with inner-city kids in the cities helping them rebuild their lives. But if the kids don't want to do it and won't behave, there's nothing these college kids can do to help them. So let's give them that. At a certain level, this is self-evidently true.

But what is the problem? These problems are our problems. They're not just single problems. If there's a big crime rate and a whole lot of people getting killed with guns, that affects all the rest of us because some of us are likely to get shot.

Now, I see the Brady bill in a totally different way because I see these problems as community problems. And I think a public response is all right. And I think saying to people who have the line I said, I think we ought to say to people, "Look, it is just not out of line for you to be asked to undergo the minor inconvenience of waiting 5 days to get a handgun, until we can computerize all the records, because, look here, in the last year and a half, there are 40,000 people who had criminal records or mental health histories who didn't get handguns, and they're not out there shooting people because you went through a minor inconvenience. You don't gripe when you go through a metal detector at an airport anymore, because you are very aware of the connection between this minor inconvenience to you and the fact that the plane might blow up, and you don't want that plane to blow up or be hijacked."

Well, look at the level of violence in America. It's the same thing. I don't have a problem with saying, "Look, these assault weapons are primarily designed to kill people. That's their primary purpose. And I'm sorry if you don't have a new one that you can take out in the woods somewhere to a shooting contest, but you'll get over it. Shoot with something else." [*Laughter*] "It's worth it." [*Applause*] I'm glad you're clapping. I'm glad you agree with me, but remember, the other people are good people who honestly believe what they say. That's the importance of this debate. It's the attitudes. We have to—we're having this debate.

The NRA that I knew as a child, the NRA that I knew as a Governor, for years, were the people who did hunter education programs, the people that helped me resolve land boundary disputes when retirees would come to the mountains in the northern part of my State and go into unincorporated areas, and who could and couldn't hunt on whose land. And they actually helped save people's lives, and they solved a lot of problems. I mean, this is a different—these are deeply held world views about working—but the way I look at it is it's like the airport metal detector.

I'll give you another example. It might not be popular in this group. I agree with the Supreme Court decision on requiring people who want to be on high school athletic teams to take drug tests, not because I think all kids are bad, not because I think they all use drugs, but because casual drug use is going up among young people again. It is a privilege to play on the football team. It is a privilege to be in the band. It is a privilege to have access to all these activities. And I say it's like going through the airport metal detector. You ought to be willing to do that to help get the scourge of drugs out of your school and keep kids off drugs. That's what I believe, because I see it as a common problem. So we all have to give up a little and go through a little inconvenience to help solve problems and pull the country together and push it forward. But this is a huge debate.

Look at the AIDS debate. You may think it's a little harder. First of all, the truth is not everybody who has AIDS gets it from sex or drug needles. I've got a picture on my desk at the White House of a little boy named Ricky Ray. He and his family were treated horribly by people who were afraid of AIDS when they first got it through blood transfusions, he and his brother. And he died right after my election. I keep his picture on my table to remember that. Elizabeth Glaser was a good friend of mine. She and the daughter she lost and her wonderful son that survived her, they didn't get AIDS through misconduct. So that's just wrong. I know a fine woman doctor in Texas who got AIDS because she was treating AIDS patients and she got the tiniest pinprick in her finger, a million-to-one, 2-million-to-one chance. But secondly, and more to the point, the gay people who have AIDS are still our sons, our brothers, our cousins, our citizens. They're Americans,

too. They're obeying the law and working hard. They're entitled to be treated like everybody else. And the drug users, there's nobody in this country that hates that any more than I do because I've lived with it in my family. But I fail to see why we would want to hasten people's demise because they paid a terrible price for their abuse.

You know, smoking causes lung cancer, but we don't propose to stop treating lung cancer or stop doing research to find a cure. Right? Drunk driving causes a lot of highway deaths, but we don't propose to stop trying to make cars safer. Do we? I don't think so.

So I just disagree with this. Why do we have to make this choice? Why can't we say to people, look, you've got to behave if you want your life to work, but we have common problems, and we are going to have some common responses. I don't understand why it's got to be an either/or thing. That's not the way we live our lives. Why should we conduct our public debates in this way?

And the best example of all to me that our problems are both personal and cultural and economic, political, and social is the whole condition of the middle class economically. I think it requires public and private decisionmaking. Family values, most families have them. But most families are working harder for less so they have less time and less money to spend with their children. Now, that's just a fact. That's not good for family values. And I don't believe exhortation alone can turn it around. It's going to require some common action. I think that what we did with the family leave law supported family values. I think that we can have a welfare reform law that requires parental responsibility, has tough work requirements, but invests in child care and supports family values.

I think we can have a tax system that gives breaks to people to help them raise their kids and educate themselves and their children, and that would support family values. I think we can have an education system that empowers people to make the most of their own lives, and I think that is profoundly supportive of family values. And I do not believe the Government can do it alone. I believe there are other things that have to be done by people themselves and also by employers.

One of our major newspapers had an article yesterday on the front page, or the day before, saying in the new world economy the employers call all the shots, talking about how more and more workers were temporary workers, more and more people felt insecure. You know, it's all very well to exhort people. But if they're out there really busting it, doing everything they can and falling further behind, and they're not being treated fairly by people who can afford to treat them fairly, then that's something else again, isn't it?

The global economy, automation, the decline of unionization, and the inadequate response of too many employers to these changes have led to a profound weakening of the condition of many American workers. There aren't many companies like NUCOR, a nonunion company, a steel company, where people get a fairly low base hourly wage, but they get a weekly bonus; nobody's ever been laid off; every employee with a college kid, student—a child who's college age, gets about $2,500 a year as a college allowance; and the pay of the executives is tied to the performance of the company and cannot go up by a higher percentage than the pay of the workers goes up.

Now, by contrast, in the 12 years before I took office—this is all in the private sector—the top management of our companies' pay went up by 4 times what their workers' pay went up and 3 times what their profits went up percentagewise. And that trend has largely continued, if anything accelerated, even though we limited the tax subsidy for it in 1993.

So I would say to you that there are some things that mere exhortation to good conduct will not solve, that require other responses that are public or that are private but go beyond just saying these are personal or cultural problems.

I also think that if we want to maintain a public response, there must be a relentless effort to change but not to eviscerate the Government. We have tried weak Government, nonexistent Government, in a complex industrial society where powerful interests that are driven only by short-term considerations call all the shots. We tried it decades and decades ago. It didn't work out very well. It didn't even produce a very good economic policy. It had something to do with the onset of the Depression.

On the other hand, we know that an insensitive, overly bureaucratic, yesterday-oriented, special-interest-dominated Government can be just as big a nightmare. We've done what we could

to change that. The Government has 150,000 fewer people working today than it did when I took office. We've gotten rid of thousands of regulations and hundreds of programs. We have a few shining stars like the Small Business Administration, which today has a budget that's 40 percent lower than it did when I took office, that's making twice as many loans, has dramatically increased the loans to women and minorities, has not decreased loans to white males, and hasn't made a loan to a single unqualified person.

We can do these things. I wish I had all day to talk to you about what the Secretary of Education has done in the Education Department to try to make it work better and make common sense and involve parents and promote things like greater choice of schools and the building of charter schools and character education in the schools. It's not an either/or thing. You don't have to choose between being personally right and having common goals.

So that's my side of the argument. That's why I think my New Covenant formulation is better to solve the problems of middle class dreams and middle class values than the Republican contract. But perhaps the most important thing is not whether I'm right or they are, the important thing is how are we going to resolve this and what are citizens going to do. How can we resolve the debate?

I believe—and you've got to decide whether you believe this—I believe that a democracy requires a certain amount of common ground. I do not believe you can solve complex questions like this at the grassroots level or at the national level or anywhere in between if you have too much extremism of rhetoric and excessive partisanship. Times are changing too fast. We need to keep our eyes open. We need to keep our ears open. We need to be flexible. We need to have new solutions based on old values. I just don't think we can get there unless we can establish some common ground.

And that seems to me to impose certain specific responsibilities on citizens and on political leaders. And if I might, just let me say them. They may be painfully self-evident, but I don't think they're irrelevant. Every citizen in this country's got to say, "What do I have to do for myself or my family," or nothing else counts. The truth is that nobody can repeal the laws of the global economy, and people that don't have a certain level of education and skills are not going to be employable in good jobs with long-term prospects. And that's just a fact. The truth is that if every child in this country had both parents contributing to his or her support and nourishment and emotional stability and education and future, we'd have almost no poor kids, instead of having over 20 percent of our children born in poverty. Those things are true.

The second thing is, more of our citizens have got to say, "What should I do in my community?" You know, it's not just enough to bemoan the rising crime rate or how kids are behaving and whatever. That's just not enough. It is not enough, not when you have example after example after example, from this LEAP program I mentioned, the "I Have A Dream" Program, to the world-famous Habitat for Humanity program, to all these local initiatives, support corporations that are now going around the country revolutionizing slum housing and giving poor working people decent places to live, to the work of the Catholic social missions in Washington, DC, and other places.

It is not enough to say that. People have to ask themselves, "What should I be doing through my church or my community organizations?" People who feel very strongly about one of the most contentious issues in our society, abortion, ought to look at the United Pentecostal Church. They'll adopt any child born, no matter what race, no matter how disabled, no matter what their problems are. There is a positive, constructive outlet for people who are worried about every problem in this country if they will go seek it out. And there is nothing the rest of us can do that will replace that kind of energy.

The fourth thing that I think—the third thing I think citizens have to do that is also important, people have to say, "What is my job as a citizen who is a voter? I am in control here. I run the store. I get to throw this crowd out on a regular basis. That's a big responsibility. We're the board of directors of America. Are we making good decisions? Are we making good decisions? Do we approach these decisions in the right frame of mind? Do we have enough information? Do we know what we're doing?"

I can tell you, the American people are hungry for information. When I announced my balanced budget and we put it on the Internet, one of our people at the White House told me there were a few hours when we were get-

ting 50,000 requests an hour. The American people want to know things.

So I say to every citizen, do you have the information you need? Do you ever have a discussion with somebody that's different from you, not just people who agree with you but somebody who's different? You ever listen to one of those radio programs that has the opposite point of view of yours, even if you have to grind your teeth? [*Laughter*] And what kind of language do you use when you talk to people who are of different political parties with different views? Is it the language of respect or the language of a suspect? How do you deal with people? This is a huge thing. What do you have to do for yourself and your family? What can you do in your community? What can you do as a citizen?

Thomas Jefferson said he had no fear of the most extreme views in America being expressed with the greatest passion as long as reason had a chance—as long as reason had a chance. Citizens have to give reason a chance.

What do the political leaders have to do? I would argue four things: Number one, we need more conversation and less combat; number two, when we differ we ought to offer an alternative; number three, we ought to look relentlessly at the long term and remind the American people that the problems we have developed over a long period of years; and number four, we shouldn't just berate the worst in America, we ought to spend more time celebrating the best.

Those are four things that I think I should do and I think every other leader in this country ought to do. Conversation, not combat, is what I tried to do with the Speaker in New Hampshire, and I want to do more of it with others. I'm willing if they are. I think it would be good for America.

Secondly, differ but present an alternative. That's why I presented a balanced budget. A lot of people said, "This is dumb politics." The Republicans won the Congress by just saying no: No to deficit reduction, and call it a tax increase. Run away from your own health care plan, say they're trying to make the Government take over health care. That may be. But that's because this is a confusing time. It's still not the right thing to do.

Americans don't want "just say no" politics. If they can get the truth, they'll make the right decision 99 times out of 100. And we have to offer an alternative. And so do they. We all should. When we differ, we should say what we're for, not just what we're against.

The third thing is important, looking for the long term. I was really sad in 1994. I'll be honest with you, on election day I was sad. I kind of felt sorry for myself. I thought, "Gosh, you know, the real problems in this country are these income problems," and "Look what we've done with the family leave law. We cut taxes for families with incomes under $28,000 a year by $1,000 a year. We've done," and I reeled it all off. And I said, "Gosh, I feel terrible." And then I realized, how could they possibly feel anything in 2 years? These income trends are huge, huge trends; huge, sweeping over two decades; fast international forces behind them; trillions of dollars of money moving across international borders working to find the lowest labor cost and pressing down; untold improvements in automation; so fast that you just can't create enough high-wage jobs to overcome the ones that are being depressed in some sectors of the economy. These are a huge deal. How could people have felt that? Nonetheless, our job is not to get reelected; it's to think about the long term because the problems are long-term problems.

I want to read you what President Havel said in his Harvard commencement speech about this—more eloquent than anything I could say: "The main task of the present generation of politicians is not, I think, to ingratiate themselves with the public through the decisions they take or their smiles on television. Their role is something quite different, to assume their share of responsibility for the long-range prospects of our world, and thus, to set an example for the public in whose sight they work. After all, politics is a matter of serving the community, which means that it is morality in practice." I could hardly have said it better.

Fourth, maybe the most important thing is, we should not just condemn the worst, we ought to find the best and celebrate it and then relentlessly promote it as a model to be followed. You know, I kept President Bush's Points of Light Foundation when I became President. And we recognize those people every year because I believe in that. I always—I thought that was one of the best things he did. But I tried to institutionalize it in many ways.

That's what AmeriCorps is all about. The national service program gives young people a chance to earn money for college by working

in grassroots community projects all across the country. When I was in New Haven at the LEAP program, I had AmeriCorps volunteers there. I was in Texas the other day walking the streets of an inner city and a girl with a college degree from another State was there working with welfare mothers because she was raised by a welfare mother who taught her to go to school, work hard, and get a college degree, and she did.

We have to find a way to systematically see these things that work sweep across this country with high standards and high expectations and breaking through all this bureaucracy that keeps people from achieving. We can do that. And the President ought to do even more than I have done to celebrate the things that work, and I intend to do it and to do more of it.

Now I believe, obviously, that my New Covenant approach is better than the Republican contract approach to deal with the problems of middle class dreams and middle class values. But when I ran for this job, I said I wanted to restore the American dream and to bring the American people together. I have now come to the conclusion, having watched this drama unfold here and all around our country in the last 2½ years, that I cannot do the first unless we can do the latter. We can't restore the American dream unless we can find some way to bring the American people closer together. Therefore, how we resolve these differences is as important as what specific position we advocate.

I think we have got to move beyond division and resentment to common ground. We've got to go beyond cynicism to a sense of possibility. America is an idea. We're not one race. We're not one ethnic group. We're not one religious group. We do share a common piece of ground here. But you read the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution: This country is an idea. And it is still going now in our 220th year because we all had a sense of possibility. We never thought there was a mountain we couldn't climb, a river we couldn't ford, or a problem we couldn't solve. What's that great line in the wonderful new movie "Apollo 13," "Failure is not an option." You have to believe in possibility. And if you're cynical, you can't believe in possibility.

We need to respect our differences and hear them, but it means instead of having shrill voices of discord, we need a chorus of harmony. In a chorus of harmony you know there are lots of differences, but you can hear all the voices. And that is important.

And we've got to challenge every American in every sector of our society to do their part. We have to challenge in a positive way and hold accountable people who claim to be not responsible for any consequences of their actions that they did not specifically intend, whether it's in government, business, labor, entertainment, the media, religion, or community organizations. None of us can say we're not accountable for our actions because we did not intend those consequences, even if we made some contribution to them.

Two days ago, on July 4th, the people of Oklahoma City raised their flags and their spirits to full mast for the first time since the awful tragedy of April 19th. Governor Keating and Mayor Norick led a celebration in Oklahoma City, which some of you may have seen on television, a celebration of honor and thanks for thousands of Oklahomans and other Americans who showed up and stood united in the face of that awful hatred and loss for what is best in our country.

You know, Oklahoma City took a lot of the meanness out of America. It gave us a chance for more sober reflection. It gave us a chance to come to the same conclusion that Thomas Jefferson did in his first Inaugural. I want to read this to you with only this bit of history. Thomas Jefferson was elected the first time by the House of Representatives in a bitterly contested election in the first outbreak of completely excessive partisanship in American history. In that sense, it was a time not unlike this time. And this is what he said: "Let us unite with our heart and mind. Let us restore to social intercourse that harmony and affection without which liberty and life itself are but dreary things."

We can redeem the promise of America for our children. We can certainly restore the American family for another full century if we commit to each other, as the Founders did, our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor. In our hour of greatest peril and greatest division, when we were fighting over the issue which we still have not fully resolved, Abraham Lincoln said, "We are not enemies but friends. We must not be enemies."

My friends, amidst all our differences, let us find a new common ground.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:24 a.m. in Gaston Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Father Leo J. O'Donovan, president, Georgetown University; Molly M. Raiser, Chief of Protocol, Department of State; Gov. Frank Keating of Oklahoma; and Mayor Ronald Norick of Oklahoma City, OK.

Remarks to the National Education Association
July 6, 1995

I want to thank you for your kind introduction and even more for your many years of distinguished leadership for our children, our schools, our parents, and of course, for our teachers. And to all of you delegates, I want to thank you for the support you have given to our administration to help us to get here and to help us honor our commitments to the children, the teachers, and the future of America.

I also want to thank you for the high honor you paid my good friend Secretary Riley by naming him your 1995 Friend of Education. I don't have to tell you that education has no better friend than Secretary Riley. I'm proud to have him in my Cabinet, and I'm proud to have worked with him for nearly 20 years now. He's actually doing what others say we ought to be doing. He's supporting more parental involvement. He's supporting higher standards and results-oriented programs. He's supporting accountability, but he's also supporting grassroots empowerment for teachers, for parents, and for local schools throughout this country. He is really making a difference, and he deserves the support of all Americans and all Members of Congress, without regard for their party.

You know, of course, that the Vice President very much wanted to be with you today. But of course, his mother fell ill and had to have surgery yesterday. I'm happy to report to you that as of this morning Mrs. Gore is doing much better. She is a remarkable woman. Many years ago she was the first woman lawyer in Texarkana, Arkansas, so I've always thought we've sort of had a claim on her, too. I know all of you join Hillary and me in praying for Mrs. Gore and her speedy recovery, and for her husband, Senator Gore, and for Al and Tipper and their entire family.

I'd like to begin this morning by just taking a few minutes to talk about what I said when I spoke at Georgetown University a couple of hours ago. It's something I believe I should be talking about more as President.

When I ran for this office, I said I wanted to do two things: first of all, to restore the American dream and, secondly, to bring the American people together again. What I've learned from the journey we've been on for the last 2½ years is that we cannot restore the American dream unless we do bring the American people together again.

You and I and all Americans must talk about how we treat one another, how we reach the hard decisions we have to make during this time of profound change, how we bridge these great divides in our society. We have got to find a way to reach common ground, a new common ground that honors our diversity but recognizes our shared values and shared interests, drawing strength from both to make the very best of what we can do in America. We have to recognize that there are real reasons why Americans feel that our sense of unity and national purpose is coming apart, why they often feel frustration and anger and confusion.

The challenges of this day are new and profound, as profound as any we have faced in many, many decades. For most people my age and a little younger, two great certainties organized our lives. They've organized the lives of Americans for most of the last half-century: first, the hope of middle class dreams and, second, the strength of middle class values.

Today, more and more Americans are less certain of both. The middle class dream that work will be rewarded and that the future for our children will be better is fading for too many people. More than half of all of our people are working harder to earn less than they did 15 or 20 years ago. And middle class values, the values of hard work, strong families, safe